



The Old Ironsides Report

2 July 2003

Medic volunteers to serve where the action is

Tory and photo by Sgt. Mark Bell, 372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Pfc. Amber Bryant, a medic with C Company, 47th Forward Support Battalion, 1st Armored Division, wants to be on the front lines of Operation Iraqi Freedom every day.

Bryant volunteered to stand guard duty at Baghdad's busiest checkpoint at the former presidential compound, the scene of frequent protests and sometimes violent demonstrations.

In addition to being ready to perform first aid to U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians in case of emergency, she also works with sentries searching women and girls wanting to enter the compound.

"Why sit around in a hanger and wait for something to happen," she said. "I want to be where the action is and what better place than right here."

Although her medical unit's headquarters on the Baghdad International Airport has electricity, running water and a nearby Burger King, Bryant chooses the life of the infantryman as her role in the ongoing peacekeeping mission inside the city's center.

"I'll be honest, I joined the Army for college money," she said. "I'd never thought I'd be here in Iraq, let alone in the middle of protests and riots, but I am here every day helping the Iraqi people after the fall of the regime of Saddam."

To some, it could be seemingly unimportant, but Bryant's job of searching females requesting entrance to the compound is just as important as the male soldiers standing point at the razor-wire's edge.

"Females are just as capable of delivering a bomb or weapons into the palace," she said.

"Because in Iraqi society, men can't search females, and that's why I am at the front gate," she explained. "I also believe it shows the women of Iraq that women are equal and can do anything a man does — even fight a war."

Bryant is no stranger to danger. Reporting to the main gate is an adventure in itself. From rock throwing to sniper attacks, Bryant and fellow soldiers controlling the gate put their lives on the line daily.

As the media paints a different picture than Bryant sees each day, she said it's important to tell the real stories about the Iraqi people.

"Americans who disagree with what we are doing, might understand how much we've helped this



Medic Pfc. Amber Bryant, C Company, 47th Forward Support Battalion, greets a young Iraqi girl at a military checkpoint.

country and its people," she said. "We are doing the right thing here. I just know it. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but someday, people will see the change we made."

Bryant said not only should people support the military but also join the military to learn true discipline.

"No matter how mad you get at your boss, you just have to say 'Roger, Sergeant,' and move out to execute the mission."

Bryant said she is proud to be serving side-by-side the infantrymen and sharing the goals of Operation Iraqi Freedom: to bring freedom and safe and secure communities to the Iraqi people.

NEWS

Tropical Storm Cuts Power to Thousands

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - A fishing boat was missing in the Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday and thousands of homes and business had no electricity in the wake of Tropical Storm Bill, which blew across the South with wind and record rainfall.

Some customers were likely to be without power until Wednesday, utilities said. A quarter of one Louisiana town was flooded after its levee broke - for the second time in less than a year.

Pope Names Leader of Boston Archdiocese

BOSTON (AP) - Pope John Paul II named Bishop Sean Patrick O'Malley to lead the Boston Archdiocese Tuesday, sending a man known as a healer into the epicenter of the clerical sex abuse crisis in the U.S. church.

O'Malley set a humble tone as he looked at the job ahead of him. "The path has never been easy but today it seems overwhelming," he said at a news conference. "Still, I feel privileged to be called."

Bush Visits D.C. School to Tout Vouchers

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush renewed his push for school-vouchers on Tuesday, backing legislation that would give District of Columbia children private-school tuition grants and, Bush hopes, spark new momentum nationwide for such programs.

Bush has rarely spoken out for vouchers since Congress rejected his proposal two years ago to strip federal funds from the worst-performing schools and make them available to parents for private education vouchers.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

It is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters, in the end.

--Ursula K. LeGuin

Billy and his dad were excited about fan appreciation night. They wanted to get one of the souvenir baseballs thrown into the stands. As they hurried toward their seats, they saw a man drop a ten-dollar bill. Billy picked up the money.

"Hey, Mister," he said loudly. The man in front of him turned around. "You dropped this." Billy handed him the money. "Thank you," said the man. Billy returned to his dad. Just as they reached their row, a ball came sailing towards their empty seats. Someone from the row behind caught it. Billy swallowed hard.

"I know," said his dad, looking at Billy, "But you did the right thing."

For his effort, Billy will bring home a souvenir far more lasting and valuable than a baseball or a ten-dollar bill. He will know the bittersweet feeling of making a sacrifice to do what is right.

What sacrifice have I made to do what is right?

SPORTS

N., S. Korea Discuss Joint Olympic Team

By SUSANNA LOOF

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (AP) -- North Korea and South Korea are making progress on forming a unified team for the 2004 Athens Olympics.

IOC members Kim Un-yong of South Korea and Chang Ung of North Korea discussed the issue Tuesday.

"We talked about sport exchanges, North Korean athletes' entry in Athens, in taekwondo at least, and the possible organization of a unified team in Athens," Kim said.

The two nations will continue talks next month at a meeting regarding the World University Games, to be held Aug. 21-31 in Daegu, South Korea.

"Anything is possible," Kim said. "We'll have to discuss more details."

Chang said the decision depends on the two Korean national Olympic committees.

Athletes from the two Koreas paraded together in the opening ceremony at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and have since marched under a common flag at several international competitions. They never have competed as one team at the Olympics.

The South Korean city of Pyeongchang hopes to hold the 2010 Winter Olympics. Bid organizers have promoted the idea that the games would promote peace and reconciliation on the peninsula. The Koreans were separated in 1945 and the Korean War ended in 1953 without a peace treaty.

Bid chairman Gong Ro-myung highlighted the issue during Tuesday's signing of the Olympic truce, which aims to encourage the halting of wars during the games.

"Korea is a divided land, so this truce has double meaning for us," he said.

Kim minimized the symbolic importance of the North Korea-South Korea meeting, which was held a day before the IOC vote to select the 2010 host city. Vancouver, British Columbia, and Salzburg, Austria, are also bidding.

"I meet him all the time," Kim said. "It's nothing special."

Chang reiterated North Korea's support for the Pyeongchang bid, Kim said. He said concerns about security on the Korean peninsula were unfounded.

"People worry too much," Kim said. "We had the safest Seoul Olympics, safest World Cup, safest Asian Games. We have no problems on the Korean peninsula."

TODAY'S WEATHER

High: 106F

Low: 74F

